



Environmental Assessment Decision Notice
and
Finding of No Significant Impact
Woods Bay Fishing Access Site Improvements
October 31, 2020

Description of Proposed Project

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) in Region 1 is proposing improvements to the dock and parking area at Woods Bay Fishing Access Site (FAS) near Woods Bay in Lake County, Montana. FWP would replace the existing dock with a new dock that is anchored to fixed pilings and re-organize the parking area at the site to improve traffic flow and parking. The existing dock requires replacement and the new dock would be designed to withstand the forces generated by the wind and waves that batter the exposed section of shoreline there. The current parking layout is congested and FWP would angle and extend the parking spaces to accommodate longer vehicles and improve traffic flow.

Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Process and Public Involvement

FWP released a draft environmental assessment (EA) for 30-day public review period on September 21st, 2020, with comment closing October 21st, 2020. The EA was advertised through media releases and legal notices in the Daily Inter Lake, Helena Independent Record, the Lake County Leader and on the FWP website and social media (Facebook & Twitter). Copies of the EA were available from the Kalispell FWP office, on the FWP web site, and at the Montana State Library and the Flathead County libraries.

The EA evaluated the potential impacts of the following alternatives:

1. Alternative A: No Action

If no action was taken, FWP would not replace the dock or improve the parking at Woods Bay FAS. The existing dock would continue to be damaged by wind and waves requiring costly repairs and would eventually be damaged beyond repair. The parking layout would continue to be congested and inadequate for longer boat trailers.

2. Alternative B: Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, FWP would replace the existing dock with a more robust dock attached to fixed pilings and would improve the parking layout to improve traffic flow and accommodate longer boat trailers.

Summary of Public Comment:

FWP received two written comments during the comment period. Neither comment supported or opposed the proposed project. One comment requested that FWP install signs on the FAS property boundaries to prevent trespass onto neighboring private property. The other comment requested that FWP work to improve the signs on the roads the direct people to the FAS to prevent people from getting lost on the way to the FAS and ending up on private roads. This comment also suggested that FWP should change the name of the site because it is not actually at Woods Bay, which is the name of a community and a geographic feature nearby.

Response to Public Comment:

FWP will install signs along the property boundary to identify the boundary independently of the proposed project. It is up to the neighbors to post their property if so desired. FWP will also work with the neighbors to improve the signs on the roads to prevent recreationists from making wrong turns on the way to the FAS. Once again, it is up to individual property owners or associations to post their roads and properties as private if desired. FWP is not currently proposing to rename the site because the name is consistent with FWP's site naming policy.

FWP Recommended Alternative and Final Decision

Based on the analysis in the environmental assessment (EA), I find Alternative B to be the preferred alternative. I have evaluated the EA and applicable laws, regulations, and policies and have determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. Through the public review process described above, the public raised some concerns with the project, but all concerns were either addressed directly in the EA or in this decision notice. FWP found no significant impacts on the human or physical environments associated with this proposal; therefore, the EA is the appropriate level of analysis and an environmental impact statement is not required.

Alternative B: Proposed Action

FWP would replace the existing dock with a more robust dock attached to fixed pilings and would improve the parking layout to improve traffic flow and accommodate longer boat trailers. These improvements would improve public use and safety of the site.

Noting and including the responses to public comments, the draft EA will become the final EA and together with this decision notice will serve as the final documents for this proposal.

The final EA may be viewed at or obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region One, 490 N. Meridian Road, Kalispell, MT 59901. Please direct requests and questions to:

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Jim Williams
Regional Supervisor



Date